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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TRUE DIVERSITY RECEPTION
WITH SINGLE ANTENNA

The invention relates generally to a method and apparatus for implementing a true

5 diversity reception with fewer antennas.

Diversity reception may be defined as radio reception in which a signal is received by combining or selecting signals from the same source that have been received at two spatially separated points, and which may vary in their fading characteristics at any given instant. In a received signal, fading refers to the variation, over time and space, of either

10 the amplitude or the relative phase, or both, of one or more of the frequency components of the signal. Thus, diversity reception may be used to minimize the effects of fading. With the present state of the art, achieving true diversity reception in wireless communication requires complex antenna configurations.

Accordingly, there exists a need for a wireless communications system for achieving true

15 diversity reception without having to use a complex antenna configuration.

It is therefore a feature of the present invention to overcome the above shortcomings related to wireless communications systems in general, and true diversity reception requirements in particular, by providing a method and apparatus for true diversity reception in a wireless communication system, wherein the true diversity reception is

20 achieved with a single antenna.

In a first general aspect, the present invention presents a system for wireless communication, particularly for receiving communication signals, said system comprising: a main antenna structure, said antenna structure adapted to receive a communication signal as a first internal signal; and an antenna cable, said antenna cable having a first end

25 operationally coupled to said main antenna structure and a second end, said antenna cable including a main conductor for passing said first internal signal, and a second receiving conductor, said second receiving conductor adapted to receive said communication signal as a second internal signal, and wherein said second receiving conductor as a receiving element is spatially separated from the main antenna structure

30 In a second general aspect, the present invention presents a method of providing diversity reception in an antenna system, said method comprising: providing a main antenna structure, said main antenna structure adapted to receive a communication signal as a first internal signal; and providing an antenna cable, said antenna cable having a first end operationally coupled to said main antenna structure and a second end, said antenna cable

adapted to receive said communication signal as a second internal signal, and wherein said outer shield acts as an antenna and is spatially separated from the main antenna structure.

In a third general aspect, the present invention presents a wireless communication system comprising: a signal source for providing a communication signal; a first antenna for

5 receiving said communication signal as a first internal signal, said first antenna operationally connected to an antenna cable; a second antenna for receiving said communication signal as a second internal signal on an outer shield of said antenna cable, said second antenna being spatially distinct from said first antenna, and wherein said outer shield provides an electromagnetic shield for said antenna cable; a signal receiver having a

10 first input for receiving said first internal signal via said first conductor, and a second input for receiving said second internal signal via said second conductor; and signal processing circuitry operationally connected to said first input and said second input, said signal processing circuitry adapted to operationally modify said first internal signal and said second internal signal to produce a usable signal.

15 In a fourth general aspect, the present invention presents a method of wireless communication comprising: providing a signal source for providing a communication signal; providing a first antenna for receiving said communication signal on a first conductor, as a first internal signal; providing a second antenna for receiving said communication signal as a second internal signal on a second conductor, said second

20 antenna being spatially distinct from said first antenna, and wherein said second conductor provides an electromagnetic shield for said first conductor; providing a signal receiver having a first input for receiving said first internal signal via said first conductor, and a second input for receiving said second internal signal via said second conductor; and providing signal processing circuitry operationally connected to said first input and said

25 second input, said signal processing circuitry adapted to operationally modify said first internal signal and said second internal signal to produce a usable signal.

In a fifth general aspect, the present invention presents an apparatus containing a wireless communication system, said apparatus comprising: a first antenna for receiving a communication signal on a first conductor, as a first internal signal, said first antenna

30 operationally connected to an antenna cable; a second antenna for receiving said communication signal as a second internal signal on an outer shield of the antenna cable of the first antenna; a signal receiver adapted to separate said first internal signal and said second internal signal; signal processing circuitry operationally connected to said first

input and said second input, said signal processing circuitry adapted to operationally modify said first and second internal signals to produce a usable signal; and an electrical power source operationally coupled to, and adapted to provide electrical power to said signal receiver, said signal processing circuitry, and said first and second antennas.

5 The present invention has the advantage of achieving true diversity reception in a wireless communication system using only one antenna.

The foregoing and other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following more particular description of embodiments of the invention. It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed

10 description are exemplary, but are not restrictive, of the invention.

The features and inventive aspects of the present invention will become more apparent upon reading the following detailed description, claims and drawings, of which the following is a brief description.

Figure 1 is a schematic view of a communication network including single antenna reception.

15 Figure 2 is a schematic view of a communication network including true diversity reception with two spatially separated antennas.

Figure 3 is a schematic view of a communication network including true diversity reception with a single antenna in accordance with an embodiment of the present

20 invention.

The following is a detailed explanation of the structure and method for a antenna system which provides true diversity reception with a single antenna and its associated antenna cable, according to the present invention. It should be noted that the same reference numbers are assigned to components having approximately the same functions and

25 structural features in the following explanation and the attached drawings to preclude the necessity for repeated explanation thereof.

In a wireless communications system, there are three components of interest to the present invention. These are an antenna, a receiver, and an antenna cable which operationally connects the antenna and the receiver. The present invention makes use of the antenna

30 effect of the antenna cable itself to provide true diversity reception of a single communication signal with a single antenna.

More specifically, it is possible to use the antenna effect of the antenna cable itself. When the antenna cable is exposed to a RF signal, a current (i.e., a skin current) is induced on the

skin (e.g., in the shield, shell, or just below the "skin") of the antenna cable. The skin current is usually terminated at the receiver's antenna input, in order to eliminate interference with the antenna signal. In the present invention, however, the signal induced on the cable's outer conductive shell (or braid, or skin) can also be used. Because of the 5 location of the cable, the signal from it is equivalent to the signal from distinct, spatially-separated antennas, thus this embodiment is capable of providing true diversity reception with a single antenna.

The present invention may be implemented as a single assembly of an antenna terminal block or an adaptor. To extract two signals, radio frequency (RF) transformers or standard 10 surface acoustical wave (SAW) filters or differential amplifiers or other devices can be used.

Referring now to Figure 1, a wireless communication system 100 featuring single antenna reception is illustrated. In Figure 1, a radio frequency (RF) signal source 120 representing signal 125 which is received by antenna 130 provides one communication for the receiver. 15 Antenna 130 in turn supplies a signal along antenna cable 135 to the receiver input represented here as an electrical load ("R-load") 160. The structure of antenna cable 130 is typically an electromagnetically shielded cable, (such as, inter alia, a coaxial pair, wherein the center conductor and the shield are an integral part of the RF transmission line), which includes an electromagnetic shield 140. Electromagnetic shield 140 is a conductive 20 material in the form of, inter alia, a metal braid, jacket, or a solid outside shallow conductor.

In the scenario of Figure 1, only currents induced in the antenna 130 will be fed into the receiver 150. In this case, the signal 125 is picked up at a single location, namely at the antenna 130. In wireless communications systems, however, there are frequently 25 occasions wherein the received signal is subjected to the existence of so-called "dead spots", or nulls, for the received signal. A dead spot occurs when the reception point or the signal density pattern changes so that it is probable that the signal reception point will cross signal strength spots where the signal strength is very close to zero, or a zero, resulting in a dead spot where reception is impossible.. Dead spots may be caused by 30 reflections and superposition of the reflected and direct signals, such that signal density patterns are created which contain these dead spots. Further, dead spots may occur when the signal density pattern changes, for example due to the effects of weather, interference from flying objects that are not part of either the transmitting or receiving apparatus, etc.

One way to reduce the affects of such dead spots is to use diversity reception in the wireless communications system. Diversity reception systems require two different, spatially-separated antennas. An embodiment of a wireless communications system with diversity reception is illustrated in Figure 2.

5 In Figure 2, wireless communications system 200 includes a RF signal source 220 which is induced by communication signal 225 which is received by a first antenna 230. First antenna 230 in turn supplies a first internal signal along first antenna cable 235 and electromagnetic shield 240 to electrical load ("R-load(1)") 260 representing receiver 250. The structure of first antenna cable 230 is typically an electromagnetically shielded cable, 10 which includes an electromagnetic shield 240. Electromagnetic shield 240 must be a conductive material in the form of, inter alia, a metal braid or jacket.

Similarly, the communication signal 225a of wireless communications system 200 is also received by a second antenna 231, as communication signal 225b. In actuality, the first communication signal 225a and the second communication signal 225b are, in fact, the 15 same communication signal. For the sake of clarity in this explanation, the signal source 200 is shown as providing two distinct signals 225a, 225b in order to emphasize the fact that the two signals 225a, 225b, as received at each antenna 230, 231, have a slightly different signal density pattern characteristic, due to the spatial displacement between the two antennas 230, 231. That is, the two antennas 230, 231 each receive the same 20 communication signal 225a, 225b, they just receive it at a different location.

Second antenna 231 in turn supplies a second internal signal along second antenna cable 236 to electrical load ("R-load(2)") 261 representing receiver 250. The structure of second antenna cable 231 is typically the same as the first antenna cable 235, such as an electromagnetically shielded cable, which includes an electromagnetic shield 241. 25 Electromagnetic shield 241 may be a conductive material in the form of, inter alia, a metal braid or jacket.

Since first antenna 230 and second antenna 231 are distinct and spatially-separated antennas, diversity reception may be achieved because the statistical probability of the coincidence of both the antennas 230, 231 hitting a dead spot in the communication signal 30 density (i.e., strength) pattern at the same time is much less than for a single antenna such as that illustrated in Figure 1. Thus, a diversity reception system having two spatially-separated antennas provides a much more stable system than the single antenna system of Figure 1.

A general illustrative embodiment of the present invention is shown schematically in Figure 3. Wireless communication system 300 includes radio frequency (RF) signal source 320a, induced by communication signal 325a, which is received by antenna structure 330. Antenna structure 330 is representative of any type of known wireless

5 communication receiving device, such as, inter alia, a telescopic rod antenna found on an automobile. Antenna structure 330 in turn supplies a first internal signal 376a, corresponding to communication signal 325a, through the antenna cable 335, with its associated electromagnetic shield 340, to the input of a receiver represented as electrical load ("R-load(1)") 360 of receiver 350. Electrical load ("R-load(1)") 360 represents
10 signal processing circuitry known in the art and used for the processing of communication signals to produce signals which can be manipulated by an end user. The structure of antenna cable 335 is typically an electromagnetically shielded cable, which includes an electromagnetic shield 340. Electromagnetic shield 340 must be a conductive material in the form of, inter alia, a metal braid, jacket, or a solid outside shallow conductor. For
15 illustrative purposes herein, the electromagnetic shield 340 may be considered conceptually as an independent conductor that acts as an antenna. However, in the embodiment of Figure 3, it is the electromagnetic shield 340 which acts as the second antenna.

The communication signal 325a of wireless communication system 300 of Figure 3 is also
20 received by antenna cable's electromagnetic shield 340 as second signal 325b. For the sake of clarity, the equivalent signal source 320 is shown as producing two distinct signals, the first equivalent signal 325a and the second equivalent signal 325b. Thus, second equivalent signal 325b is the signal 325a as it is received by the second antenna, which antenna is actually an antenna cable's electromagnetic shield 340. When communication
25 signal 325b is received by electromagnetic shield 340, it becomes second internal signal 376b. Antenna cable's electromagnetic shield 340 thus acts as a second antenna, and as a second conductor, and supplies second internal signal 376b to the receiver input represented here as electrical load ("R-load(2)") 361 of receiver 350. R-load(2) 361
represents signal processing circuitry known in the art and used for the processing of first
30 and second internal signals 376a, 376b in order to produce signals which can be manipulated by an end user. First decoupling device 380 provides signal extraction for the first internal signal 376a received on the antenna 330. Second decoupling device 381 provides signal extraction for the second internal signal 376b received on the antenna

cable's electromagnetic shield 340. Decoupling devices 380, 381 represent any suitable device for isolating electrical communication signals, such as, *inter alia*, electronic filters, transformers, transistors, differential amplifiers and other devices suitable for the task. Generally speaking, the signals from the first and second antennas are not isolated from each other. Rather, they exist simultaneously on both the inner main conductor and the outer shield. However, the two signals exist in different "differential domains." Thus, when the signals are separated at the antenna input terminals of the receiver, signal processing circuitry utilizes "differential reference points" are used to extract the two signals produced by the antenna and the outer shield.

10 In one embodiment, the present invention may be applied to an automobile radio receiver. In this scenario, the antenna structure 330 is the rod antenna typically mounted on a fender of the automobile. The antenna cable 335, with electromagnetic shield 340, connects the antenna structure 330 to the receiver 350 mounted in the dashboard of the automobile. Thus, there is a length of antenna cable 335, and electromagnetic shield 340, which is situated at a spatially distinct location from the antenna structure 330. The antenna cable 15 335 includes the antenna cable electromagnetic shield 340. As discussed *supra*, for the purposes of this invention, the antenna cable's electromagnetic shield 340 is treated a second antenna. Since the dashboard-mounted portion of the antenna cable electromagnetic shield 340 is located in a spatially distinct location and exposed to the 20 communication signal and is treated as a second antenna, the effective result is that true diversity reception may be achieved with a single antenna.

Embodiments of the present invention have been disclosed. A person of ordinary skill in the art would realize, however, that certain modifications would come within the teachings of this invention. For example, rather than the single device embodiment 25 discussed herein regarding Figure 3, the present invention also encompasses embodiments wherein there are a plurality of antennas and/or a plurality of receivers. Therefore, the following claims should be studied to determine the true scope and content of the invention.